

[00:00:00.160] - Speaker 1

Hi. My name is Susie Weiss and I'm a North Oakland neighbor. And I got connected to the here here community billboard through sue. And I've been able to help out a little bit thinking about community engagement and what that looks and feels like. And I've gotten to join a couple times being an engager, so going out with the truck a few times to get to chat with neighbors. And I'm particularly interested in how the truck functions as a spark for engaging neighbors in conversations that they might not otherwise have. So one of the things that I've done is to follow up with some folks that have expressed interest in having the truck come to their block. And that's really exciting because that means they've taken the first step to imagine that they and their neighbors could be in conversation in new ways. And so a little bit the role there is helping to just demystify. Like, you don't have to have a perfect plan. It's a really low barrier to entry way to have a conversation with your neighbors. And the truck is so magical because it draws people out of their houses, and it brings people into conversation in a very natural I want to say natural, but of course it's not natural because it's this cute little truck.

[00:01:22.840] - Speaker 1

But it's a comfortable way to be like, oh, what's this? What's happening? Yes. Oh, hello, neighbor. So it's a really casual way to take up a provocation to be in new kinds of conversation. So the Here here Community Billboard truck is a neighborhood activation vehicle. It's literally an electric truck. It has a beautiful screen on it, so it shows videos, stories that neighbors have recorded, questions that neighbors are invited to answer. And this cute little truck can pull up anywhere, and people are drawn to it. What is this truck? What are these questions? Oh, I have a thought about what my neighborhood needs or what it feels like to be a neighbor here in North Oakland. The Community Billboard Truck is actually this magical vehicle that invites conversation and invites neighbors to have conversations that they haven't had before. The conversations the truck provokes are really wide ranging. I've seen conversations where people are talking about the history of the neighborhood. Sometimes people start talking about when they moved here and who moved here and when this neighbor passed or this neighbor was born to kind of very get to know you kinds of questions.

[00:02:51.790] - Speaker 1

Folks also ask each other and end up talking about questions like, what does it mean to be a neighbor? What do we need in our neighborhood? What would it look like to improve our neighborhood? What might we need from each other? What might we need from the city? It really goes in a lot of different directions, but it starts with the basics of what does it mean to be a neighbor and who gets to belong here. The first time I encountered the truck was on my very own block. It was the early days of summer 2022, and the team was just getting going with driving it. The engine, I think, had just been put in, I don't know, or the wheels, it had just been approved to be roadworthy. And so the truck was doing some early kind of pilot rides around the neighborhood. I live on 47th street in North Oakland. And so they came to 47th street. And the truck, when I saw a text that the truck was there, it had already passed my house. And so I went running down the street. Wait, wait, the truck, the truck is here. It's here.

[00:04:07.310] - Speaker 1

And so got the truck to stop and it came back down because I had started to raise a commotion and there was this adorable truck. Other neighbors started coming out. We started having conversations. A landlord who doesn't actually live on the block but has multiple properties there happened to be there. So he was talking about it. A neighbor who unfortunately had had a friend shot on our block was there and she came out. Friends that I've known for a long time, and we've done some kind of popup neighborhood engagements together. They came out. And so it was really beautiful because it was all the kind of parts of activity on the block showed up in that exact moment that the truck was there. Like

the very lovely of remembering times that we'd learned about each other, times that we'd eaten meals together, and then also those sad and horrible life that there had been multiple shootings on our block.

[00:05:06.640] - Speaker 2

What is significant about this neighborhood and.

[00:05:09.090] - Speaker 3

The history of it?

[00:05:10.910] - Speaker 2

The neighborhoods that the truck sure.

[00:05:15.190] - Speaker 1

So the truck right now anyway, is focused on North Oakland. I won't say it that way. The truck is focused on North Oakland neighborhoods. And North Oakland is the historic center of the birthplace of the Black Panther party, among other things. But that is a really important historic piece of the neighborhood. And as with many parts of Oakland, it's a neighborhood that's really in transition. So one of the things that the truck is doing is helping to remind neighbors of the legacy of this neighborhood and that the folks from those times are still our neighbors. That even though we've had lots of new neighbors, we also have neighbors that have been longtime residents, generational residents of this neighborhood. So the truck is really helping to support in this neighborhood in particular, the intersecting of these histories, the remembering, the noticing, the storytelling about what it really this neighborhood is all about and where it's been, and the potential that those historical pieces could actually be a part, need to be a part, should be a part of its future. I hope the future of the truck is that it keeps going in this neighborhood and that there's a fleet of other trucks that go to other neighborhoods.

[00:06:43.290] - Speaker 1

I'm not a fan of just spreading things, for spreading things. But we've already seen so many people say, well, could it come to my neighborhood? What about my neighborhood? Could it come to East Oakland? There are a whole bunch of different kinds of stories there. So the original truck, I think, probably wants to stay in North Oakland, but you can imagine that there are other neighborhoods that might want to and would be interested in supporting a truck in their neighborhood. I think there are organizations, parts of the city, the Department of Violence Prevention, for instance, that's quite interested in neighborhoods as a really important kind of unit of community engagement. So you can imagine lots of different trucks. But I think they always want to have a kind of local home in their neighborhood. The kinds of conversations that the truck provokes, empowers, enables us to have are person to person conversations. They're neighbor to neighbor conversations. They touch on all the biggest issues of our city and of our time. So they are about race relations, they're about gentrification, they're about what we need in a contemporary city to be able to live together.

[00:08:02.140] - Speaker 1

And it's really important that they're happening on the scale of person to person, because those kinds of conversations about this moment, about racial reckoning, about real estate practices, there's a laundry list we could talk about those get

blown up. And they're important policy conversations, they're important national conversations. But the only way to really have them, in my humble opinion, is neighbor to neighbor. The art of the truck is in fact, the creativity. Of course, Sue Mark, who started the truck, and her team, but it's really the creativity of every single person who comes out and is willing to say, oh, what? Oh yes, I have an answer to that question. I know what it means for me to be a neighbor. So the creativity of the truck is that of the whole community. It's the participatory, the art of the truck is participatory. It's the art of community getting to raise our hand and say, oh yes, I haven't thought about that question. I have something to say about what it means to be a part of this community, a part of this neighborhood, a part of this city, and I do want to contribute my voice.

[00:09:19.920] - Speaker 1

So the art is really an incredible patchwork of voices that the truck helps to honor and capture, but not in an extractive way, in a very participatory, humble, confidencebuilding way. I think the real art of the truck is to say to individuals and their groups, their families, that you're an important part of this community and your voice really matters. And it's not just your voice that matters in terms of voting once a year or every election cycle. It's actually your stories that matter. It's your being here now. It's actually coming out on this Saturday morning to have a cup of coffee with a neighbor that you might not know. So the art of the truck is really about participating in our neighborhood. So one of the reasons that I got engaged with the Hair Hair Community billboard is because I have a really strong interest in design and particularly design for belonging. And by that I mean our ability to come together and build community. And my approach to design for belonging is actually really very much about small scrappy experiments being willing to try something in order to come together. I think that we build powerful communitybased culture on a daily basis, not because of some giant summit, but rather in the daily.

[00:10:54.580] - Speaker 1

And so what I love about the truck is that it brings that spirit. Right here is this funky little truck. It's like no truck you've ever seen and it pops up in your neighborhood and whoever you are, you get to say, oh wow. And I haven't really thought very much myself perhaps on that day about what it means to be part of this neighborhood or what it means to be part of community in Oakland. But this funky little truck says, yeah, you too can and should think about that. It's an opportunity. So what I love about the truck is the spirit of spontaneous engagement and the spirit of building community by getting started. Some of the engagements that I've had with people are folks that are excited to do some community building. They might be thinking about having a block party or doing a potluck, but it seems a little intimidating. The cool thing about the truck is it makes it possible here's this reason to come out because you can use the truck as a tool of engagement. So my work in design for belonging is very much about tool building. And I see the truck as a powerful tool that embodies and empowers our ability to connect or reconnect where we need to in our neighborhoods.

[00:12:18.790] - Speaker 1

One of the experiences that I had with the truck was going out on a Friday night drive. So this was a drive with the truck. It wasn't for a planned engagement per se. We were just out in the neighborhood and we drove by the park and I hopped out of the truck and was having some conversations with parents and kids that were in the park and they were coming up and checking out the video. And then we noticed that a neighbor right nearby who turned out we would discover, had a house right there. She and her family were leaving in their van and they stopped to peer at the truck. And it was a beautiful thing because it turned out that she had grown up in this neighborhood and had moved away, but that she and her husband had in fact moved back. So she had all this really interesting history of these multiple periods of time in the

neighborhood and she's someone who has since then gotten really engaged and decided to host an event, bring the truck back to the block and host a specific event to share some of that history and engage some of her neighbors.

[00:13:31.860] - Speaker 1

Because in the intervening times between her history and now, nobody knows the depth of her history. And so the truck can come back and help her to tell some of those stories and help her neighbors understand some of those layers of experience that are right there in the moment.

[00:13:51.560] - Speaker 3

1 second.

[00:13:53.290] - Speaker 1

So it's really interesting when a neighbor happened to see the truck and then decided that let's see, in this one experience, a neighbor saw the truck and was really intrigued by it. And as we started to talk to her for the very first time, she shared the layers of history that she has with the neighborhood and decided to do an event herself so that she could share some of that with other neighbors and hear the stories of other neighbors that have moved in since. This story to me is a really great example of what the truck can spark is that it sparks a conversation that hadn't been had before. And it makes it kind of simple. You don't have to sign up to have a massive block party. You can simply say, hey, this truck is going to be here on Saturday. Come on out. We'll be sharing some stories. And so the power of letting the truck be the kind of invitation to a conversation that you haven't had before I think is really incredible.

[00:15:12.090] - Speaker 4

Yeah. So this project to me has been a way for neighbors to really connect in to each other. And there's something to be said that when there's any kind of project that always turns neighbors towards each other, it just feels like such a win. And that is part of my values as well as neighbors for racial justice. So I was very quickly drawn in. Yeah. So the idea of this truck coming to the neighborhoods, right, it's this sweet little point of an event that catches people's eyes and then you stumble over to this truck, what's happening at this truck? And then folks are talking to each other and then what comes out of those kind of conversations when normally people might stay at the border of an event or maybe say hi from across the room, but this truck says, come in and let's chat, let's talk. And I think that's so much of what's kind of centered around the idea of this track, again, is how do we turn towards each other and start to talk and know each other and how might we build from there.

[00:16:29.190] - Speaker 5

For the initial conversations we had, the focus was a lot about looking at a particular block. So very small scale, component or piece, even conversations about what is a block or what is your neighborhood, what does that look like? And how to figure out, not us figure it out, but help the residents on the block. Figure out who are the key people in your neighbors, who are the leaders, how do we get you in conversation and connected and learning about the history of the neighborhood and how do they want to be involved in any of the connections that might come out of what the project's intent was. For me, the first event that I got to attend was the kickoff at the Rolling Gate Library in North Oakland, where I recently moved in the last couple of years to this neighborhood from another one in Oakland. So I was really drawn in to see who's going to come, what kind of conversations are going to happen. And it was beautiful. It was a wonderful array of

people, older people, younger people, newer residents, long term residents, communitybased kind of activist people, and then just folks who are hanging out, want to see what's going on at the library today.

[00:17:44.860] - Speaker 5

And the trucks having this screen with videos of people, longtime residents, some who had passed recently, speaking to what they felt was really important in the neighborhood and why they were committed to supporting it. So I do remember just kind of being in awe how it came to that. Yeah, it was beautiful gathering.

[00:18:07.080] - Speaker 3

Yeah.

[00:18:07.400] - Speaker 4

And I think for me, the first event also was the kick off. And I came, I think, maybe towards the middle because I was running late and couldn't stay late. And I thought, oh, I'll just pop in to see what's happening. And when I arrived, I kind of stood in the back and sure enough, a neighbor came up to me and said, how do you know sue? And we started talking and made some connections that we knew similar people. And therein lies right the point of the truck. And I stayed maybe ten minutes. And here I had made this quick connection as someone who I kind of knew through other people, and so I already knew. This is golden. This is a really sweet, sweet addition to our city. And I feel really excited about what the next events are going to show.

[00:18:55.440] - Speaker 5

Shakira and I, as members for Neighbors for Racial Justice, were contacted by sue with Commons Archive to talk about this project of bringing neighbors together. And we were asked to bring our focuses a lot in our work is on equity lens and really strategic thinking about bringing neighbors together and how we build community together. And so we were initially asked to come in an advisory role, and we did have numerous meetings, and we looked back at notes and we had one document that said 2020 on it. And so it wasn't this immediate, like, oh, we talked, we met a few times, we figured it all out. No. And even for my own role, there was a lot of kind of mystery of I'm not really sure where exactly this is trying to go. And it was really quite incredible to be a part of the thinking process at the beginning and asking a lot of questions. And I felt like I was there as a listener a lot and trying to absorb what you and Toby were working on in terms of the grant and how myself as a new neighbor in the neighborhood was drawn.

[00:20:10.380] - Speaker 5

To that kind of connecting with people and how to think about bringing people together, especially during those times with COVID when people were not coming out of their door to have a conversation. So that's my recollection of the beginning phases.

[00:20:27.390] - Speaker 4

Yeah. And I think for me, remembering rolling back a bit, that we had connected around neighbors for racial justice PowerPoint, around racist profiling. And so already our friendship and our connection had started around social justice, work and equity and what that meant to us individually and into our communities. And I think you'd invited us to a few

more to present and then some time had went by. And then when we reconnected around this idea, around the micro grant and what we do with this money, that what was already laid down was this foundation of justice and equity. And I knew for you and Toby that it was very much center in your work. And so it drew me in right away. And I feel like our conversations and many, many conversations, right. The document, as Deb said, dated back to 2020, were centered around Jimet. We grow this idea for the community, but always have our eye on justice and equity. And you and Toby being white women leading this, what also drew me in is you knew right away that this doesn't belong to us while we'll launch it. We definitely want to pass this on.

[00:21:41.280] - Speaker 4

This belongs to the community. And so with all of that swirling came this really beautiful idea. And if that's at the root of it, I feel like, you know, what has manifested and what will continue to manifest in our community will be so much of that, because that was the foundation. And so that it feels really touching to me, right. That it's more than just a truck in a neighborhood. It came from such heart and such humanity. Yeah. Yeah. I think how I would describe the truck, and I guess I should just how I describe it to friends and family that don't know is it looks like a truck that we put together ourselves.

[00:22:26.280] - Speaker 1

Right.

[00:22:26.580] - Speaker 4

It's this very tiny, kind of very small wheel, two seater, tight, compact, bright yellow. So it just draws you in with this amazing screen on the back. So you have this kind of dual thing happening where it's this older 70s style truck with this modern screen. And so right away, like, what is happening with these two things going together? And it's mobile. You can drive this through to different parts of the city and draw people in by that amazing color. And on the track with the screen can be just these rolling messages, right. That whatever it is, we want to as it's connected to the event and whatever that message is, that it's drawing folks in to talk and to be together. So that's often how I describe it to friends and family who don't know.

[00:23:22.440] - Speaker 5

Yeah, sure. I remember the first time I really saw it in the neighborhood, the truck in the neighborhood. It's so little. It fit almost on the corner, just the corner where a cafe was. And so I thought, oh, that's so it's cute. It tracks people. And the fact that it fit in this tiny little space, it's not like this overwhelming. How are we going to navigate this? Makes it so user friendly for small venues, for little events, for informal dialogue. So I thought, oh, that was really smart, not having this huge thing that's like, how are we going to navigate that into a conversation?

[00:24:00.780] - Speaker 4

Yeah.

[00:24:01.260] - Speaker 5

And so I love seeing it. I love getting to be a witness to what happens in front of it or buy it.

[00:24:09.390] - Speaker 2

So how does the truck facilitate conversation? What kind of conversations does it facilitate?

[00:24:19.060] - Speaker 5

One of the events I went to, I observed people asking a question of the folks who were either gathered there or sitting at their table having coffee. One of the questions was, what do you want to see happen in your neighborhood? Or what do you want to see changing your neighborhood? And then I believe there were questions being displayed on the video screen and sometimes videos of neighbors talking about their neighborhood, their stories. And what I heard is people starting to share, well, where do you live? Oh, what block are you on? Oh, my God. I live across the street from you. I've never met you before. Oh. And we have this common interest and maybe even a common response to that question. Or maybe they were so different that it drew kind of an interesting conversation that never would have happened if that truck and the engager person that comes with the truck wasn't there. Which is what we were hoping for, right, is I might be sitting at a cafe here, and you're there, and we maybe notice each other, but nobody seeks that extra intimate connection.

[00:25:27.420] - Speaker 1

Right.

[00:25:27.770] - Speaker 5

But because there's an intentional question put to you and someone cared enough to ask the question, I noticed people making a commitment to respond. You know how some people are like, I'm not interested. Right. When you approach them with a clipboard. Or it's different than that, because it's not about some formal research survey that's going on. It's really, truly about, I want to know what you think. Tell me how you feel. And that humanity that connecting, it's working.

[00:26:04.740] - Speaker 4

Can you ask the question again, please?

[00:26:06.930] - Speaker 3

Yeah.

[00:26:08.560] - Speaker 2

How does the truck facilitate conversation and.

[00:26:12.360] - Speaker 3

What kind of conversations does it facilitate?

[00:26:15.480] - Speaker 4

Yeah. So the truck and the way it breeds such rich conversations right. Is I've been to only the opening. I haven't been to others. But what I imagine and how I would love to use it is bringing it into my community. We do a lot of conversations around public safety and really reimagining safety. How do neighbors turn to each other? And so I imagine having this track with a question that Zach Morris poses that says, what are some noncarcell ways to safety? Right? So striking questions like that that get people out of their head around needing more police, other things, the normal path we know, what else might there be? So to me, it poses these questions where we get to dream and we get to think beyond kind of what we've always known. And that's what I love about this idea of posing such a striking question that surrounds your event and gets people really going and thinking in a different and deeper way.

[00:27:24.160] - Speaker 2

What is particularly pivotal about this neighborhood? What is important about the truck in.

[00:27:30.740] - Speaker 3

This neighborhood and the neighborhoods that it's gone to?

[00:27:38.560] - Speaker 5

I think what's important about the truck being in this neighborhood is that not that it isn't happening in other neighborhoods in Oakland, but there is a rich history in the North Oakland neighborhood of black families having been here. For decades and with the gentrification, at least over the last ten years, to see a lot of loss of those black families and a lot of influx of younger, sometimes single or young couples who are white who may or may not have children and seeing that sorry. Seeing the tension that exists on those blocks and in the neighborhoods and lack of communication or interaction or very little, which I think for a lot of people if you look at social media and on next door these really intense and very painful and difficult conversations. And sometimes racist things are posted and profiling is happening. So with all of that going on and then the history of the Black Panthers having been here and still here, which I didn't realize until being a part of this project, they're still here, and they're very much involved. And a part of this project is to see that history and that energy is still here.

[00:29:02.250] - Speaker 5

And this is not to say that it disappeared and now it's back in because of the truck, but somehow that truck and that messaging and that energy around it is helping facilitate some healing, I believe, and bringing that commitment to the neighborhood, especially for these new people who didn't feel like they knew anything about their new neighborhood. And this is helping get them, I think, more engaged.

[00:29:27.660] - Speaker 4

Yeah. The importance of the truck in this neighborhood, to me, is so much about centering the voices of families and folks that have been here for so long, black and brown families that have really at the root of growing this city. Yet their stories and their inputs and their wisdom has been pushed to the margins and ignored and hidden in ways. And I think what this truck does is says, I want to hear you, please, let's gather your stories before it's too late. So we have those captured, and so those are noted, too, because they're so much a part of what makes this city so rich and what a blessing to have those noted somewhere for future folks to look back and go, that's how this city came to be. Right. It's not just a one sided rate

story and that the knowers of this city are also the black and brown families that live here for so, so long. Yeah. So blessed. Yeah.

[00:30:39.840] - Speaker 2

What do you hope for the future of the truck and projects like this?

[00:30:53.300] - Speaker 4

I think the future of this truck and similar projects. Again, I'm going to repeat myself around the importance of anything that turns neighbors to each other, anything that turns the community back to each other. I see you. I know your story. Right. Because when that happens, you open up. You're looking out for that person. You want what's best for that person. And that's a game changer, right. In this culture, that's so individualistic mind, my mind. This is my yard, my parking space. Right. How might we break through some of that? And the way this country is headed, we need one another. It's going to take a community to survive what's coming. And so the more projects that support that unity, I think the better off we're going to be. That's how we're going to survive this.

[00:31:48.050] - Speaker 5

So, yeah. Thinking about the future of the project and how it could bring people together more, I also think about beyond North Oakland and across other neighborhoods in the city. We've been having recent conversations about how to connect with maybe other nonprofits who could potentially partner with us on this and those who already especially have committed to this kind of conversation with neighbors. Shakira had mentioned Zac Norris with Ella Baker Center and their National Night Out for Safety and Liberation was something that very much aligned with not just our group, but with the project and the way that the truck and the engagers were going about having these kinds of interactions. I also really hope that it brings more people outside into their neighborhoods. And it's not on zoom. It's an actual physical way to stand on your own block where I think people are. So I mean, it's painful to think about. Like, people are so afraid to go out of their houses in a lot of our neighborhoods in the city right now. And it's almost I'm remembering maybe it was the 70s or the take back the night, the women's marches. It's like, take back your blocks.

[00:33:11.430] - Speaker 5

Not from I don't want to take it back from the enemy. There's no enemy. It's more about just take it back for yourselves because it's where you come home to every day. It's where you wake up. And leave to go out into the community from. So why can't it be a center in place for whether there's a truck on the block or not? I'm just kind of thinking together with this, the truck can be right, that initiator. And then we're hoping, oh, now you're going to have these block gatherings in whatever way you want to, which I believe was way back when, when we were starting to talk about this to be open, not have an idea how they should come together and be on their block when you first ask that question. I know I'm silly, but I still hear the ice cream truck almost every night. Maybe it's going to quiet down as we're getting cooler and darker, but around 730 to 08:00, it goes around our clock. And I thought, oh, I think there should be ice cream on the shrine. How do we work that in? But anyway, yeah, just to think about what else could it do?

[00:34:21.900] - Speaker 2

Hey.

[00:34:22.290] - Speaker 3

All right.

[00:34:22.670] - Speaker 2

Well, my name is David Peters. I'm a third generation West Oaklander, the founder of the West Oakland Cultural Action Network and the Black Liberation Walking Tour. I get involved with the here here truck project through being a big fan of Sue Mark's work with the Carmen archive. I've been kind of sniffing around the Common Archive for the last few years because after moving back to my family home five years ago, after being down on the central coast of California for 20 or so years, really noticed a big change in the neighborhood. Culture was changing, really. The fabric of my particular block in the neighborhood was ripped and had been frayed. Just those folks that I had grown up with have been in the neighborhood for so long, so many of them were gone. So I came across the Common Archive Project, I think on the Internet somewhere. And it was just like, this is cool, just building community with neighbors. It was based out of the Golden Gate Library, which is like a super cool library. And then I just went to an event. I was like, I'm in the next neighborhood over, but wanted to check out what was going on and how it was happening and how do you do something like this?

[00:35:51.140] - Speaker 2

So that was my first introduction to sue and her work to become an archive. And then we just became friends and fans of each other's work that each of us was working on, respectively. And then she started talking about this idea for this cool yellow solar powered truck with some audio and video on it. And I was like, this is super cool. It really seems like a cool vehicle, really, to meet people where they are on a really small scale and hyper local kind of way. I described it here truck as a community engagement tool for north and Northwest Oakland. It is visually just so cute, right? So it's like you just want to hug. You just want to hug the thing kind of right. It's like this little tiny it's a tiny truck, old school. It's painted just this really bright canary yellow, and you can't miss it. It's got sound. It's got a video board on one side and then a static board on the other side. And it's really a way for me, I really love the idea because it's a tool for creating just small scale engagement just on the street with people.

[00:37:06.740] - Speaker 2

So it comes to people, it does people don't have to go where an event is. It's really kind of meet people where they are. Well, and so I guess the best way to answer what kind of conversations it facilitates and how it does it is I had it come to my front yard one day, and so it pulls up, and then people are going by and walking their dog. There's a couple of engagers that drive and are with the truck, and people invariably just slow down and check it out and see what's going on and like, what's going on. So it gives an opportunity both for the engagers that were with the truck and then myself, who was there, who asked the truck to come by to just talk to people. You ask new neighbors their names, the neighbors that pass by walking their dogs and just wave and keep going. Now they stopped. You could just say, where do you live? And then if whatever the topic is, you get an opportunity to ask them about what they think about whatever, what the issues of the day are, what do they think is important about being in community, how do we create community?

[00:38:16.670] - Speaker 2

I think I had them over because we were to let people know that we were having a community building event in my backyard. So I've got a community building series called brown nick or Friday hashtag BLF Branga bible, something

brown. And we hang out on Fridays and just chat, domino's, food, music, drink, a little brown liquor, and then it's just a way to meet the neighbors. And so it could be intimidating for folks to come to somebody's house they don't know. Right? There's always, for many of us, that kind of barrier. So when it comes from the backyard to the front yard, you get an opportunity to kind of engage people in the front yard. There's a difference between front yard space and backyard space. Backyard space is more private, a little bit more suburban. Hanging out in the front yard is more urban. You know, it's more rural. It's more certainly more oakland. It has those rural roots, and it really just provided an opportunity for me to, you know, to have the barbecue grill in the driveway and kicked up a little stuff. You know, having food is such an important part and other culture and just in a way to invite people in and kind of make that first introduction makes it a little bit less scary and intimidating, both for them as well as for me.

[00:39:32.060] - Speaker 2

The engagers are great because this is an opportunity to actually reach out to people as they stop and talk to them about whatever folks want to talk about. The story of north Oakland's neighborhoods are very similar to the stories of all of Oakland's flatline neighborhoods and most directly connected to west Oakland. Oakland has found in 1850s or so had 61 maybe. And it really had a small black population. Black, I'm going to talk about the black experience here. Had a smallish black population up until world war II when the second great migration wave came through Oakland. North Oakland. Always of neighborhoods. And so my experience growing up here around the tennis scale, it was a heavily Italian neighborhood. As I was driving over here today, I passed by bird and Thai and I went to Bertolas, and I remember Britolas was there when Vernes market over on Broadway. And just having that experience of with my grandparents coming over here and just recognizing there were still a lot of Italian businesses and families and cultural clubs in this neighborhood. If I think back further in north Oakland's history, I'm fascinated by history and think about the golden gate neighborhood.

[00:41:03.430] - Speaker 2

And before that it was Clinterveville, I think really one of Oakland's oldest suburbs. If we think that Oakland began closer down to the estuary and then spread out along San Pablo and telegraph and Broadway and Grove. Now MLK market in west street, really driven by first horse drawn street cars and an electric railway and then the key system. These were really suburbs initially for the older urban core. And you can kind of, you can see that along some of those arterial streets. Really big corner lot houses. I imagine that they had big lots and now we've got some infill. And then these places like Clinton Erville were founded as separate settlements and then eventually incorporated and annexed into Oakland those neighborhoods of firmly farmers, lots of working class ethnic folks, italians, Portuguese folks who come from all over, all over the world were in these neighborhoods and making lives. I think what then it becomes really interesting for me is then when black folks came to Oakland, beginning in the forties to come work in the shipyards, oakland had a 4% black population in 1940, and that exploded. Oakland was almost half black by 1980.

[00:42:39.920] - Speaker 2

And tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of black folks came primarily from Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. And a great percentage of them were from the rural south. And so that really changed the character of Oakland and its culture. These folks were first confined down to west Oakland, but also have to recognize their oakland had had black population going back into the 1880s. Delilah Beasley wrote the negro trailblazer, self published negro trailblazers in California in the 19 teens and traveled all over the state to consciously capture these stories of these black pioneers. And there are still some very proud Oakland families here who, when I talk about great migration, they go my family has been here for 100 plus years before 1900. And we're here own property, own businesses, suit the state for I think the state's

first civil rights suit to integrate schools came from a family that lived in Oakland. And so the history runs deep. And I can't talk about the history of black folks in North Oakland without connecting that to the history of black folks in South Berkeley. There had been a population from South Berkeley. A lot of folks came to go to Cal, and it was one of the few places that offered integrated educational opportunities for black folks.

[00:44:07.930] - Speaker 2

And so you had a professional class, an educated class of black folks that had clustered around the South Berkeley. For me, I'm fascinated by this tension of this educated population that had been rooted here for a long time. And then all these Southern migrants, and then that when they came and they mixed together, and you got this energy from these folks who were seeking a little bit less Jim Crow and finding a whole bunch of segregation here and being frustrated by that, and then incorporating with these ideas of a lot of the folks that had been educated. It's really interesting. And so in some ways, my family's story is similar to that. My grandfather came along with several of his brothers, and then my grandmother, and then some of hers kin folk. And they kind of spread out, you know, West Oakland, North Oakland, Richmond, and really in a certain way, as you go down, went down San Pablo. We had the municipal boundaries between these cities, but it was a single community. And so, you know, I think that is really an interesting part of the story. You know, North Oakland was really an aspirational neighborhood for a lot of the black folks in West Oakland because the housing stock in West Oakland was older, 1800s.

[00:45:23.540] - Speaker 2

I'm guessing the housing stock here is more like 19 teens, 1920s, newer stock, more single family homes, less fewer Duplexes and multifamily rooming houses. And so the ability for black folks to kind of break out from West Oakland and really through the help of some white realtors who were able to crack the real estate industry's refusal to show and sell homes to black folks, really broke down some segregation barriers and allowed some black folks to come into West Oakland and to North Oakland. One of the folks that was really one of those realtors that was really important was Frederick Newton's mom. And so it's really interesting to look at that legacy from Arlene, whose name I can last name I can't remember now, and then her daughter being married to Huey Newton of the Black Panther Party, and now she's carrying on that legacy through the Huey P. Newton foundation. Program is really critical and important for us to understand that while there was redlining and while there were not so much in this part of North Oakland racially restrictive covenants, it's really a practice by the real estate industry. And so to recognize these folks who are within not very long ago in memory and descendants are still here, I think that's a key part of that story.

[00:46:55.350] - Speaker 2

And then as we move forward into when I was a kid, this was a heavily black neighborhood, but it was always a mixed neighborhood. It always had folks of all races living here's, businesses along San Pablo, an active business community, a lot of black homeowners. And I think part of what we forget today is that there were a lot of black homeowners in Oakland. And I think part of our story today of homelessness and housing and security has to do with the loss of so many of those black homeowners destabilizing, their kinship networks, social networks, cultural networks, so that people could go find a relative to stay with for a while instead of not those relatives now being displaced to places near and far. And then we got into a lot of pressure from folks coming over from San Francisco, pushing up prices, pushing up rents. And then we hit, of course, the housing crisis, the great recession, the predatory mortgage crisis. And when we saw these neighborhoods radically changed, lots of folks foreclosed on, lots of folks. But I think we have to also be conscious to recognize lots of folks chose to move away.

[00:48:18.680] - Speaker 2

Their money went a lot farther in that kind of reverse migration, going back home, going back down south, moving to Antioch or Pittsburgh, getting out of Oakland Unified School District. People there's a lot of fear around for people's, kids, greater and better educational opportunities. Many of these neighborhoods were not safe in the when the crack bomb went off. And so it was a rational choice for a lot of folks, especially middle class homeowner black folks, to take up stakes and move somewhere else. Many held onto those homes and our landlords and renting them out. And that's the thing that would be a bad word these days. I think we have to figure out how to draw distinctions between folks who've been here for a long time and are renting out property, and those kind of folks are more predatory and are buying hundreds of houses and keeping a lot of them vacant, which is another cause of the issues that we're having with homeless. And so, you know, this neighborhood is a complex and a rich story. And the way to get to that story is, I believe, is the stories of individual people. And I think that is the beauty of this truck.

[00:49:27.670] - Speaker 2

It's a way to come out and find people where they are and engage folks around their individual stories and their individual oral histories and their family. Legacies. One of the most fascinating things for me is to find out from people, how did your family get here? And so I think that is one of the beauties of this project. It's the nuances we were so reductionist about. A lot of people in North Oakland chose to leave willingly where they sold their houses or kept on it. Let's not talk about this tail of woe and displacement exclusively. Right. So he reminded me of this or something that I know. There's like 20 some people, I think, on this thing, but we ended up having this conversation. They're summarizing the 600 page document and so it was going to be key to from the east, Ray from the north and me from the west. And the people were like, wow, we just learned so much. On, my God. Like, nobody else was really talking. It was really powerful stuff. I learned a lot. I think we all just shared a lot of stuff. So then looking forward to hearing from some of the other folks from other communities as well as we kind of are educating ourselves as we try to go through this zoning process.

[00:50:50.070] - Speaker 2

And again, it's like, what is this going to do? I'm just going to matter.

[00:51:08.880] - Speaker 5

That a lot of her black neighbors sold out.

[00:51:11.530] - Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely. It's interesting because a lot of the people on my block, they got foreclosed on. Right. But that's just part of the story. So many people chose to leave, sadly, right. For many good reasons. For many good reasons. I got this big windfall to take my money to go somewhere else. But then all of a sudden, the pace of appreciation accelerated and the neighbor got a lot nicer, right? He's not unsafe the way it was, you know, just ten years ago, maybe, let alone 20 or 25 or 30. I first heard of the project from sue. She called. She laid out this idea for this truck and then convened some folks together around this idea. We just did some bonding over what it could possibly do, what would be its purpose and mission, maybe some of the logistics around it. The truck's purpose is to help create community, to really reach out to people. It is to meet people where they are. And it's one thing to have events and then folks have to come to that. It's a whole nother level of outreach and engagement to actually be able to engage people walking down the street.

[00:52:44.070] - Speaker 2

Right? So it's really a novel to my mind, an understanding way to really meet people at a really grassroots level, really one or by two. It's the most basic level of community engagement and community building to my mind, and that is culturally relevant to me. It's what I try to do. It's what I feel. My purpose is these days as a cultural bearer is to really be somebody that tries to connect myself to others and then others to each other. It's the fabric of how these neighborhoods used to work when I was growing up, when we all have heard the story of, you know, if you did something wrong, somebody's going to call home, and your neighbors are looking out as substitute parents, grandparents, money is watching you. You can't be doing somebody peeking out the window is going to tell you directly, you know, you're not supposed to be doing that. I'm telling your mama and your grandmama. So that sort of love, right? That sort of community fabric where there's refuge in other people's homes. There's adults looking out for kids. There's adults looking out for each other and their elders because people know each other on a personal level.

[00:54:13.230] - Speaker 2

And it's not just you wave at somebody going by, which is the beginning, but I believe, and I've seen this truck operate as a way just to flag people down. People would just stop and talk because it's so nonthreatening. It's just so cute. You want to talk to the dang thing, right? It's got sound and a video board. Got to love it.

[00:54:35.710] - Speaker 3

Hold on 1 second.

[00:54:37.150] - Speaker 2

Yeah. So when the truck comes to the neighborhood, you can schedule it, sign up to have the truck come out. So I signed up to have the truck come over to our house. We were promoting and marketing an event around the Good Friday event that was going to be coming up, or it may have been the June 10, or it might have been festival at the school yard. Anyway, in any event, the truck pulls up, it kind of just backed up in the driveway and just kind of stopped in the street. The engagers came out and met them, talk to them. I had prepared a little bit of food, so got them a little bit, got them a little something to eat, and then they gave him some. I think we got some cards to give out. And then as people were walking by, everybody's just talking to the folks that are passing by. They're walking, their dogs are going for their afternoon walks. I think it's a really good time to do it in the early evening as folks are walking around the neighborhood going about life. And it's just the smiles that the truck creates.

[00:55:47.520] - Speaker 2

You can see people come in and they're just less guarded because it's this super cute little truck right there, right? It's bright yellow, but then it's amazing because it's got sound and it's got moving video. And sue will generally have generally have these little quote cards that they use to ask for people to write things on. And so it was just fun. It was like low pressure. It comes with engagers and so they can really do a lot of outreach. It gave me an opportunity to kind of a hook to engage with the people I've seen walking by in a more personal way. I spent a lot time sitting on my porch waving at people. But now I'm out on the sidewalk as people are coming by and have an opportunity to talk to them. So I thought it was really cool and I'm looking forward to being able to do it again.

[00:56:38.020] - Speaker 3

What do you hope for the future of the truck?

[00:56:40.380] - Speaker 2

I hope for the future of the truck that we can see more of them. Right, so the truck has, you know, it's solar power and runs off a battery. It has limited range. I really like the fact that the truck is small and it's old and it's cute. So it would be different if it were like some new Tesla super intimidating thing, right. People just don't trust that kind of level of hyper technology. So I would like to see the truck be funded in a way that it can be stable. We know that it can have a future and that there can be more of these. Because I think is a really cool and powerful engagement tool in that there's a kind of outreach to people to make people aware that the truck is there and they can use it for whatever. And so the truck doesn't have an agenda. It is for the community to be able to use in an authentic way for the wage and the community wants to use. It is just genuinely small, d, democratic and grassroots in a really novel kind of way. So seeing what's important about community.

[00:57:51.100] - Speaker 3

What.

[00:57:51.430] - Speaker 2

Would make you feel safer in your neighborhood, things about what is your family's story or history? I'm drawing a blank. But things along just very personal types of stories, very personal types of things that is just asking people to engage, getting a little bit of their story. There's no hard questions, there's nothing like who you voting for, right? These are personal and authentic kind of questions that really kind of bring out just folks with lived experiences.

[00:58:25.200] - Speaker 3

Yes.

[00:58:25.470] - Speaker 2

I think the most important thing I've seen from the truck is just the engagement that it causes. Right? And so from the people coming by with the engagers from the people when two people walk up and they get to engage with each other just in a really organic way, when it's helped me engage with my neighbors. I think those initial introductions, the people that are in your immediate neighborhood are the key and groundbreaking kind of introductions to begin to build community. That first introduction is a hard one. And then you feel like me, you forget people's names, but you remember you saw now you got an excuse to re asked their name. And so it can be just the beginning of conversations with people. The other thing I love is looking right here at some of the feedback that people have written down for questions. I think it honors people to have be able to write down what the answers to those questions and then to have them displayed, to be able to feed that back to folks like, hey, somebody a bunch of people wrote things down and it comes back out in the community so that people will see their answers back before.

[00:59:37.600] - Speaker 2

That really helps to create trust around people that they're being honored, and this stuff isn't just disappearing somewhere. And so I think the most important thing and most valuable thing about the truck is just it's a mechanism. It's a vehicle for neighbors to meet neighbors.

[00:59:53.430] - Speaker 3

I'm Dr. Saturu NAN, and I came next to the next project. Sue and I have had several years as a working relationship and was part and parcel of how do we reconnect the community. The formula has been lost for decades, not only for North Oakland, but Oakland and beyond. So the idea was to always try something new. And the idea and concept was based upon how the Black Panther Party always worked in the community. What if we tried this concept observation, participation, study, and then the same process over, and anything new and innovative always makes an impact. So when talking with Sue, I felt that this was a grand way of actually contacting people and bringing people to the table. Like it's okay to talk with one another. We've had decades of where we have it. We've had generations of people who didn't know how and still don't know how to really converse. So this is reformatizing, how human beings converse with one another, how communities start depending upon one another, because we're finding that people are very hungry for that human contact. Well, as far as I understand, my concept of here, here is here and now, looking at the process of we're talking about bringing people in the community together as a whole.

[01:01:19.480] - Speaker 3

You have such a diverse community from what it used to be. It used to be predominantly black community in North Oakland, pretty much throughout Oakland. So with the change out of the community, two important aspects, my interpretation of here is here you are now here, and we're going to bring you up to speed on what you should know while you're here. Especially the legacy of the community. One thing I really like about what has happened and we'll continue is telling the story of longterm residents, of those that are here that can make the connection of the rich history of Oakland. Honestly, this is what it's really about, because we've had generations come in. Now they want to be part of the community. But I don't think really a lot of them know we would have people come to me all the time. They tell us how wonderful they're here in Oakland. Where do you live? I live in North Oakland. Oh, you do? What do you know? Well, I know this is diverse culture. Where I came from, it wasn't. And we like all the things that happen here. And after all, this is the home of the Black Panther Party.

[01:02:28.680] - Speaker 3

I remember I just listened to them. And my wife told them, you're talking to one right now. So the amazing concept of everybody wanting to know how to connect, even the program has notoriety now, not only here, but around the country and around the world. Part of what I do, and people from North Oakland have taken walking tours, which we have on Sundays. It's about to expand throughout the week. And the idea here is people all over the country and the world have an opportunity to know what we're doing in our community. That's one of the first questions they ask. So I always talk about the Hear hear program. Sue has the uncanny ingenious ability to hook up not only what we call engagers or people talking to people going down the street or going to locations in the park, or hooking up with business owners or special events which seem to be very successful. It has the opportunity to be visual with music, which gathers people's attention. We were joking about it. We said it's the best thing since an ice cream truck because everybody comes out when they hear that. So the idea would be to make this familiar consistently so when people come out.

[01:03:49.450] - Speaker 3

And the idea of having videos on there that are created for special occasions are truly amazing. So to me, this is just what we call a new concept in bringing people back together in the community. When you look at it, it's so unique. First of all, the size of the uniqueness of people are really tripped out about the truck itself. And it has the right colors of bright canary yellow. But when people see the videos and they listen to what's going on, they have an opportunity where they may not have read it or they may not have heard it on the news, but here it is in their face. And for a lot of people in the community of North Oakland who see it, they're like, wow, I never knew this was going on. I need to find out a little bit more about my community. I didn't know this rich history. I didn't know the opportunities of bringing our community together. We're here. And the block by block concept, it was something that we did so many decades ago. And people used to ask me, how did you guys organize? Well, we went block captains.

[01:05:01.770] - Speaker 3

Then we had subsection people, and then people would be responsible whole side of town. So we developed teams. So we didn't have the technology, but we would go and knock on the doors, make phone calls that everybody knew. Well, guess what? We're back to that again, because the here's here concept is perfect in this time frame because people are hungry for human contact. They aren't getting the answers. They're not getting them on technology. We've never seen so much disinformation to the point where the Homeland Security has a disinformation board. So the only way you're able to decipher. All these things that are going on, they say, happening in the world, lie after lie, compounded on top each other, is to be able to look at something that's going on locally in your community that ties you together. We also always remind everybody it doesn't happen overnight. It's not an event, it's an event. It's what we call a process. It's a step by step. I have a pet saying now, I say it's a Joe Biden stepping process, and everybody laughs because they see the little steps he takes. But that's what progress is. Nothing's going to happen overnight.

[01:06:20.210] - Speaker 3

But the idea and the concept of sound. I had an opportunity at the Melania Cafe, how enthusiastic people and young people are in terms of this concept and the hunger for what we call human contact, the ingenious idea of having the chessboards out there. I mean, we haven't seen that since parks used to be fooled as a community. People would come out and play chess and dominoes. I learned years ago playing dominoes, what we call the elders, and if you ever played domino's, they would talk to you, they would educate you at the same time. So what it would do by bringing people together and what that event, that particular one I was able to go to, we had people, young people, from generation to generation, so it was intergenerational. We had people 20 something all the way up through sixties and 70s engaging, and they were very happy to see this activity in the community. So as we used to say out of Chairman Miles a Tug Red book, a single spark can start a community fire in a good sense. Every time I see the truck, I pick a Tweety bird. It's so tiny, it really draws attention because of size number one.

[01:07:40.810] - Speaker 3

And the second factor is when people see it, and the people who are in the truck are talking to people, hi, how are you doing? If you had to stop, they're going down the street and people, what's so unique? Hey, what's on this truck? Right? Well, followers, we're going over here and check out what we're going to present. So people always are inquisitive when they see it, and a lot of times the videos will be rolling. So in that effect, people will have the opportunity to want to engage. But I think a lot of it is when people see the truck, the visual, and also when they have an opportunity to see that people are not just looking at them, but, hey, how you doing? It reminds me of a taxi driver. Some people go like, you're talking to me. I haven't had anyone say hi to me in a long time. And you get that, right? So it automatically opens people

up. And I think the visual, the big screen on the side and the music times they play is very important. And that draws people. It shows them something new, is happening. Something good is happening and I want to check it out.

[01:08:42.940] - Speaker 3

At least if I'm not going to be part of it initially, I will check it out and hopefully join at some point. I hope this truck, to me, I hope the future of the truck will be something that will be ongoing and continuous. This is the kind of things that people really need to look at accounting, accountability with our elected officials. You know, all the experience that we have in our network, which is the Black Panther Party alumni legacy network, not only composed of original members, but people from all walks of life as soon testify too. We're looking at this. Here is people in the community doing things. Here are people making a difference. It should be a no brainer that your Coffers should open up to continue this program and blow it out not only in North Oakland, but let it be the model for rest of Oakland in the country. Because I've had people, as I mentioned, and I'm eyes and ears and I'm coming in contact from people from Sweden to all across the United States and everywhere else, take these walking tours and that's the first thing they talk about. Oh, that's a great way.

[01:09:51.100] - Speaker 3

Maybe we ought to think about doing something that in our neighborhood. So the idea is already out there. It's just a matter of people supporting it and hopefully the community and people who call themselves elected officials. If you really think about what it cost to keep this concept going, is like peanuts compared to what they're throwing away every day. And we know this. So you could put into the idea of getting businesses in the community to support it, because that's one thing. You support this community entity, we're going to tell the community to support your business. And that's how that symbiotic relationship begins. And then that support grows. That base grows. We didn't have the opportunity when we did the work. We didn't get government grants or loans, but it was a community at large from every quarter you can think of. There's many stories about that and that's how we were able to keep this going. So this is what can be done now. So we hope that this will continue on and grow well for us. We understood the process because we've done it many times before. It's no different than the 65 documented survival programs tech kids call them.

[01:11:08.680] - Speaker 3

You guys had 65 startups. We did health clinics, senior housing, Wit program. Those are multi sites, we understand, but they were community concepts. So we saw in the beginning. We understand how it started. We started the breakfast program right here in West Oakland, 27th and west nine children ended up feeding hundreds of thousands. And then the government and the schools wanted to oh, they were embarrassed. Everything that we did was for that purpose. So this program is what we call a new I don't use the term new millennium, but a modern era, continuation of the very survival programs that the Black Panther Party and the community implemented, which are now not only still working in America, but all over the globe. That's a good question, sue. One thing that we look for, that I look forward, I've always looked for it's like someone who has a community program and they're coming with all this passion. I have this program. What are you doing? I'm helping young men be young men. I'm teaching them how to not to curse out women. We take field trips. How are you doing this? Out of my pocket. What? I get no support, but I am dedicated to make this happen.

[01:12:28.510] - Speaker 3

Well, it's the same thing in talking with people. After the Black Lives Matter concept, the brief new civil rights concept, as we call it, young people, people are looking for something to do. So as far as an engager is concerned, we always look at, do you have, number one, a passion for changing the community? Number two, are you willing to work with those that

have done this, have blazed this trail? We're not simulator pilots. We're combat pilots. We've been there. We've seen it happen. We understand the process. And number three, are you willing to commit? I know when we left the college campuses, all of us have created not only Black Panther Party, but thorough student lines. We made a total commitment. It was 24/7. We understand that can't be done at this point in time. Well, maybe things were going and might develop into that, and we love to have the funding to where people could say, I could do this. Twenty four, seven, and live my purpose. And that's part of the goal. But even showing them that it can be done and for us, coming and working with sue, it was tantamount that people would have the opportunity to see that it can be done, that no one's just blowing smoke.

[01:13:54.630] - Speaker 3

This is not a new concept. Yes. The idea also one of the main things in talking to them and talking to young people, I always tell them it's something that is not going to happen overnight. It's not a two hour movie. It's not something that's going to be ragged to riches or rainbows and unicorns in the sky and everybody in the community is happy and all the bad guys and people are going on. Right? Like a Disney movie or something. I said it's something a protracted struggle, step by step. But the most important thing, making that journey, you're going to be surrounded by people who understand. It's going to help you along the way. One thing I tell all of them and they look at when I say, I'm never going to give you advice, and I pause and go, I'm only going to share knowledge and experience of how I addressed a situation, or we as a collective addressed it. And I guarantee you, you're going to get it. It's the same thing of not telling you how to think, but teaching you how to think and not telling you what to think. So those are some of the components that we look at in the ongoing nurturing aspect of staying engaged for young people, you know, that we found.

[01:15:17.170] - Speaker 3

This is a whole new process of what we call face to face communications, and engaging with them and going back and forth helps them open up, because they'll open up to us in terms of how they feel, how they're thinking, and all they're looking for is confirmation, and they get it, you know. Did you know there were party members as young as 15? You should see their faces. I said average age was 19. I said an old guy was 30. That was Eldish Cleaver in the beginning. That's an old guy. So they're like, wow, when I tell this to school. So what it does is it grabs them right away. And for the most part, most of them have been told you're nothing. You don't know what you're doing sometimes by parents, teachers, and people surrounding them. No positive reinforcement. Last week at the fair, the history Fair, there was a young man, and it was from the white community, and he had his son had on the Berkeley Yacht Club. And so we were standing there talking. His father was telling him something about the party, and he had this look, and he started yawning.

[01:16:31.020] - Speaker 3

And what I did, I said, about you. This is about you. And by the time he understood that process of you are important, you do have something to say. Thank you so much, sir. I feel good about myself. So that's part of the process. No one is telling these young people in particular that they're worth anything. And here we come along and tell them, if you don't do it, it's not going to happen. And I had a little spice on it. As it will tell you, you have a royal legacy. You are royalty in social and revolutionary change. It's always been embedded here. That's part of the spirit of this area. And the rest of the country in the world knows it, because that's why they're coming here asking the same questions. So that's how part of the process of ongoing, being that mentor, being that encouraging individual and helping them along that way, that trail, and without actually telling them, this is what you need to be doing, you'll find your way by doing it. That way, you develop. And so it will tell you for me, any chance I get to get out as much knowledge and information, I get that when I take those tours, these educators come and they think they know.

[01:17:44.590] - Speaker 3

By the time about halfway through, I'm like, are there any questions? They're going like, no. I said, I know you didn't expect this. Did you know what you thought I said, but that's part of as much knowledge, just putting it in the knowledge out there. And the beautiful thing about it is it's all documented now, and it's all to the forefront. So the research of that knowledge and information and what the here here concept is about, it's about approving the method of community engagement. Everybody here is about a program. There are a lot of times where you go, hey, the church is not open. So and so didn't bring the food. Oh, my God, you had these things. And I tell the stories. It wasn't perfect. And for us as young people, we really had to find our way. We were 19 and 20 off the college campuses. We came from everyone from MIT to community colleges, everyone in between. And it's not just the black community, but white progressive students, asian community, and Latinos and immigrant students from Iran of Saudi Arabia. Because Ayatollah was there and everywhere else, we all came together. So we're going to change things in America.

[01:18:54.420] - Speaker 3

We didn't realize what America really was happening. And then when we're told we're domestic the greatest eternal threat, we're just trying to feed our people, it's no, but anyway, so having that experience and I was in the Black Panther Party. I joined in April, May 68. And I was down there in 67 when they came to the capital. I was playing hooky from school and some 68 to 1982 when it was officially dissolved. And how we went from the black and white proud to revolutionary communities saying, we're all one people and there are no national borders. We realize what America is about to do to everybody. So this is truly a people struggle. So having that experience and then with all the pressure, we had every agency in the world, you think Homeland Security, they were practicing us because all of them came together.

[01:19:55.150] - Speaker 2

We were kids.

[01:19:56.200] - Speaker 3

We had no idea on what we were doing. But we realized that we had exposed what they weren't doing. And every time we did it, we didn't complain. We just went and did it ourselves. And I guess they didn't like that. So this is what we're telling young people and people now, even when you think it's not changing, it is. And so this concept and I love the acknowledgement that they gave there was that Hin Jim's gave you acknowledgement for the Year Here program in front of all the other film producers. And I thought that was awesome. And also the fact that part of what you're doing is documenting the archives of this knowledge. The libraries aren't documenting this stuff. We're trying to get them to do it as a whole. Right? Nobody's documenting the community legacy, the rich history of Oakland, which people come here for. That's what they come here for. And our own community doesn't know. That's why they come here, for that reason. I come from all over the world for that reason. And they're plugging in because they want to stoke their fire. Like, what do we do? They're asking us for guidance.

[01:21:09.810] - Speaker 3

So that's why what we're doing in our own community is so important right now. So sue, figure out what we got to do to keep this concept going and build it. So I'm talking to Mashiki tomorrow about getting more students from Laning, the campuses involved. I'm going to give them a project. I got another one for them too. They're giving a free tuition. We did that in 1971-72. All the private schools. Lane is the one option complete? No free tuition, free books, free lunch tickets, free produce bag, which we got funding in 2013. The food bank on the campuses and free bus tickets. What happens after the first this semester? Right, I go to school and I didn't have the money, and all of a sudden I got a little grant and you know, if you don't go back, that screws that up again. And I'm doing well. I got a three point, something average. I feel good and just put me over to Taco. I have to pay and then next semester I have to quit. So I got work for them on that basis. As far as getting the students. But also the story of North Oak.

[01:22:24.420] - Speaker 3

This is where the Black Panther Party started. Right there. Grove on Grove Street or where the North Oakland Senior Center is. That was the Old Grove Street College. That was a spark that started ethnic studies, started black history. And also the first health clinic was that Grove Street? Before they were in the community. Then UC Berkeley for health clinic for the students. That's why we have health clinics and nurses stations on every campus in America. That was another concept that students created during the era. But go ahead. Just what else I was going to mention to you. The other thing is to recognize it's easy to recognize young people who have that understanding that they're going to be in it and they'll do it, they have a passion is because we see ourselves in them, because we were the same way and we knew we weren't going to give up at that point in time. And the other thing is we tell all the young people, our purpose is to exalt you. Our shoulders are sore. But from as, Barbara Lee and all the rest of them that we pushed up there were students and they tell that story too.

[01:23:33.870] - Speaker 3

We want to do the same thing, whether you want to go to medical school, you want to start your own business, you want to be a council person, whatever you want to do, we want to get you there. That's how you're going to make a difference. I always ask them, remember, I asked him, you want to run for a council person? Local politics is something we always believe in. We have mass voter registry. So the purpose was to control your local government. You control the funds. You got the right people in there. You don't have homelessness, you don't have millions of dollars wasted on pet projects. Everything. That was a process when we ran Bobby Seal, 73, and Elaine Brown, and then in 1977 elected the first black mayor, Lynn Wilson. By the way, he ran as an independent because the Democratic Party didn't want to support him. That's what we talk about. That too, right. And so the community got him. And then the idea was to have responsible elected people, to have responsible council people to where you never would have had what we have today. It shouldn't have been everybody should have had a place to stay.

[01:24:42.190] - Speaker 3

The housing could have been correct. I don't know. I was going to tell him if, you know, Elaine Brown broke ground on a building, said it was impossible. And we had an opportunity to go to the groundbreaking 7th and Campbell, that historic spot that night that incident happened with Officer Fry and UEP Newton with the law book and Officer Friday of getting killed right on the corner. She broke ground. And guess what? The State of California. Governor gathered attorney fliss of joy. This project is 76 unit, state of the art park building called the Black Panther. And no one for the next 15 years will pay more than \$300 a month. And the going rate is, I think average 2100, 200, 2300 for a solar panels. They're going to develop business with the community as part of the renaissance of West Oakland. But here Elaine Brown after seven

years raised. This is what we used to do. Almost \$100 million. I think it was 85 million and going got all these developers. And when I heard their testimonies of how when you're talking about someone wanting to serve in the community, that all they talked about.

[01:25:54.540] - Speaker 3

One guy says, he was a veteran, I wouldn't found \$37 million. She's like a mother. She changed. The whole way I look at developing I'm a community person now. I'm about developing housing for the people. But in any arena, this is what you so I'm saying this when they say it could be done. That's point number four. We want decent housing fit for the shelter human beings. So here she is, brought all these people together, got the funding, state of California back, and they broke ground. And the city of Oakland cannot come up with what we call housing according to income. It's based upon a sliding scale. You have this huge pot of hundreds of million dollars in the city of Oakland. You could take that and we could put people in every one of those vacant apartments downtown teachers, family members, seniors, everybody, and the city could substitute it. And it would even put a dent in the hundreds of million dollars they got where they claim they're going to build the term affordable housing, which is not a term, should be used. It should be used housing according to income. You would take thousands and thousands of families off the street and then we deal with the chronic, the hardcore, but the numbers would be like, wow, where's everybody?

[01:27:14.980] - Speaker 3

Well, we put them into these vacant apartment buildings downtown. There's thousands of units because the millennials are not coming back and they're still building. Called the contracts they had, it can be done. And when I talked to Councilman Taylor and said, oh, we're going to look and that sounds great, I'm looking at, I'm like, I never heard back from them because they know we could house police, fire people and you got safe, secure buildings. I mean, do you have a presence of all the police officers you needed downtown? Because they live downtown. There's so many parameters and this program already the Here here program, oh yeah. It's something, I don't know when's the next campaign for a council person in this area? Well, the fact part of the matter is, is that this person should have, I'm not going to mention it they should have weighed in and for their discretionary fund, I mean, it's nothing. I was told years ago when her name was running against Noel Gallo and we were working on a campaign, she told me, she said, Dr. Sturrell, she said the council people get at least two, a quarter million dollars discretionary fund that they could use for whatever.

[01:28:30.960] - Speaker 3

That's how Desalie Brooks got in trouble because they told me she was hiring a brothers sister and you. She said we could take those kind of funds and invest in community projects. The money is there. It all depends upon what they want to do. So that's when we have accountability and that's when we talk about the power of the people. And I thought, you got the power right now. You can take somebody and if you all came together, you could go down there, those at the region boat and get their behinds out of office right away. That's what they understand when they lose their salary, when they lose access to all that money. That's the only thing that we should do to them all the time. It works. That's the power of the community right now in those numbers, not going out breaking windows and throwing bricks. We like this building. We want to put him in there. We want him as mayor, right? We elected him as mayor and he's in there. And then we talked about electing Slates, where you have two or three people that are on the same page. They're talking about, I want this not only my district, but all three districts.

[01:29:30.710] - Speaker 3

We have a similar concept. It's no different than any district, right? Yes. Oh, okay. Oh, each one teach one. OK, alright, let me talk about that. All right. Each one reach one. And the idea is that if I'm able to reach you. It's a two-way street. I learned from you. We used to talk about so many years ago that the process is never that you never stop learning. When we first joined the Black Counts Party, we had to read 38 books. We were college students, Vietnam vets. We had to read 38 books and 2 hours of education classes every day. Looking at the scenario of around the world, what was happening in our community. And a lot of times, if one person was not able to comprehend it, the collective would have a second scenario where they would be able to explain to that person. So the ability to reach individuals on every level and leave no person behind. And also the teaching aspect. Each one reach one, and then each one teach one. It's a two-way, three-way, four-way street where knowledge is constantly exchanged, where each and every one has a perspective based upon reality.

[01:30:44.630] - Speaker 3

And we adopted that at the Oakland Community School. Teaching children how to think and not what to think. That is the same process of the model. Each one reach one, and each one teach one. That's when you'll see real change.

[01:31:21.660] - Speaker 6

Project the way I see a storytelling project through a cute little mini electric vehicle that travels around to various streets and neighborhoods, and we have people tell stories and we put them together. I've been fortunate enough with the Hidden Gym to have some of our alumni and students help edit pieces of those stories and even have some of our extended network help on site with the vehicle on site activation. So very happy with the project. Very important in this neighborhood right now. I was born and raised in Oakland, California, so there's a series of eye between Old Oakland and New Oakland. And I believe this vehicle can be a liaison between the two universes that exist here. So New Oakland is very disconnected from the old Oakland. But this neighborhood has so much rich history. Even if we just talk about the Black Panther Party, which was started in this neighborhood, and many people may not realize that, but Mayor College is very close to me at the original campus. So many other original Black Panther Party members lived in this neighborhood. Definitely shopped and did all the work in this neighborhood. So just that history alone.

[01:32:39.010] - Speaker 6

But there's so many historical stories from this neighborhood that I don't believe New Oakland knows a lot about, but I'm sure they would want to know. So I believe the Heir project is a vehicle, no pun intended, a vehicle to deliver those messages and those stories. Well, just the history of this neighborhood is very important. So just the vehicle rolling around in neighborhood activations, having neighbors come out, meeting the neighbors, because I live in a neighborhood, too, don't even know each other. So they don't even know who their neighbor's name or cell phone number. So just getting neighbors to even know each other is a step, but by creating a series of community activations, it's really bringing people together that normally wouldn't come together and even really communicate. So it's serving a serious purpose that we need here in Oakland. Okay, yeah. So it's a very different little electrical vehicle that's very small. It almost looks like a little pickup, but it almost looks like a little Tonka toy because it's yellow with the screen on it. So it's very different. So it catches your eye, like, what is that? Just the mere size of it alone.

[01:33:59.890] - Speaker 6

But the screen and even the other side with the big quote symbol, it's a very interesting truck. It definitely catches your eye and make you want to veer towards it and say, what's going on here? Well, within Gym, we added some pieces, in fact, so

we have the conversation with Dr. Two, Ned Demone Smith, some of the older residents in the neighborhood, and they were very interesting conversations. So those are some of the video pieces that play on the truck. So I was a part of that process with helping kind of executive produce those pieces and those conversations about this neighborhood, just historical conversations about this neighborhood, where it was, where it has been, and where it is now. I hope to see this go on for years to come. There are thousands of stories to tell just in this neighborhood, but I think this would be a model that could be copied and pasted all around the United States and even in the world with the purpose of bringing people together. We're much stronger society when we work together and come together, and I believe the vehicle could be the liaison to create that.

[01:35:07.250] - Speaker 6

Well, it's very different, so it's a very different approach. By having the truck go out and around community events, it naturally, organically brings people together because they first want to know what's going on with the truck. And then just the way they organize the events, it really brings people together. And that is easier said than done. People doesn't always realize what it takes to bring people out and bring people together that are naturally kind of distant from each other. So the truck is very powerful in that way and was able to do. And it's definitely something that I think our city government needs to look at closely in terms of bringing people together, because this is crime prevention. This is a way to build neighborhood associations and all the things a truck can bring together that's very much needed in most cities, but definitely in Oakland. Well, this Oakland is in a divide. New Oakland and old Oakland don't really communicate with each other and honestly don't really like each other. So you have the average home price here is over a million dollars now. So the people that can afford to spend 1.31.21 .5 for a two and three bedroom house are not the people that used.

[01:36:26.800] - Speaker 6

To live in two different worlds. Having been a long term residents and property owners in the neighborhood. I remember those houses were \$50,000, and the old Oakland were too, because they bought for 20 and 30, 40 and \$50,000. So it's two different worlds. There's two different worlds. And something has to be done to create more unity, more communication between the two different worlds. Because we're living with two different worlds, living in the same, living next door to each other. So I it's very little communication, and it's actually almost resentment built up between the two. Well, I think new Oakland residents, if they knew the history of these streets and knew that their neighbors took part in this history, I think that opens up a bridge of communication, because I really think that most of new Oakland have no clue that their neighbors were involved in a lot of rich history. They probably just see a couple of old people that live next door to three or four houses down, don't realize the rich history that has happened in this neighborhood, and that they live in a house that was probably a part of rich history that they have probably had no clue about.

[01:37:42.890] - Speaker 6

So I think it increases their value of their property. They spent so much money for at least the historical value of it if they knew more. And the only people that can tell you that are the ones that lived here and lived the history, you can't get a better source. North Oakland is a rich, rich neighborhood with rich in history. I've kind of studied a lot about the black panther party and the original merit college campus. So a lot of demonstrations happened here. A lot of famous speakers came in this neighborhood. My family has owned the business here for over 30 years. That's a very successful business, a recording studio. So I've been around this neighborhood for a long time. I've had a property here for a long time. So historically, there's a lot of black business owners in this area. A lot of black homeowners in this area. This is definitely one of the most gentrified neighborhoods in Oakland by far. By far. This is definitely a jewel of new Oakland. And it's

caused the prices of properties to soar through the roof and it stayed that way. It doesn't look like they're going the other direction any time soon.

[01:38:59.120] - Speaker 6

So this is an incredible neighborhood. Even when they call it the temperature district, it's still north Oakland to us old Oakland folks. I think we have to do projects like here, here. I think the survival of our city, the breakdown in communication between new and old Oakland is detrimental to the success of our city. So we need to multiply the hearing project over and over and over again. And actually get five trucks out there working all the time to really have the success that we need, because it's the future happiness of our city. Neighbors need to know each other. Neighbors need to know how to communicate. Just a crime that happens here. A lot of people stopped the neighbors to know each other. I saw somebody jump over your fence just text the neighbor. I think the guy is looking at your car funny. I think you need to go outside. Simple things like that. And there's so many activities that can take place now that we come out of COVID and I can get back and get active again if the neighbors really knew each other. So here can really help facilitate that in the community activations and bringing people together and bringing people out.

[01:40:13.510] - Speaker 6

So when Jim was founded by Rafael Flores. He's a tenured professor at San Francisco State in the film department. He's also a very decorated filmmaker himself. He started a program maybe 1015 years ago to teach youth about everything you need to know in the media industry from a working level. So as a working filmmaker director, just what it takes to be in the film industry and uses a gateway to film departments like San Francisco State. So if a young person showed interest in it and wanted to continue with higher education, they had the opportunity.

[01:40:57.660] - Speaker 3

With.

[01:40:58.180] - Speaker 6

Going to a junior college, then transferring to San Francisco State or going to recognize San Francisco State. But after they graduated from the program, they have all the skills it takes to actually become a filmmaker. And they paid a stipend for that. So not only is it a free program, the cohorts of students are paid a stipend. Then after they graduate, the program helps them get employment. So we plug them into jobs with hip hop TV. Commas Archive is another outlet for it. Green Eyed Media, Raphael's production company, is another outlet for it. So we're looking for a bunch of different outlets to train, to employ. And then the last part of it is through our Support Oakland Artist House, we're actually building a housing component to it. So not only will they be trained, get jobs, but this neighborhood is very expensive to live in. It's almost impossible for a young person starting a media career to live here. It's just too expensive. So we're doing a housing component to it which allows them to actually be able to stay in their neighborhood after graduating and while they're working. So all that together is our Support Oakland Artists House and then how we oversee the Hidden Gem program.

[01:42:14.780] - Speaker 6

I'm very proud of it. Well, it's very unique. So the Hidden Gem program is very unique in that it gives young people employment after they graduate. Now, what most people don't realize or know, unless you read the UCLA diversity report in media, is that media is one of the most racist industries in the world. It's dominated by middle aged white guys that are

in the union, and they don't allow women of ethnic groups to really enter that space. And when they do enter, they give them a hard time like, Go get my coffee, and treat them very well because they don't want them there. So they treat them bad, so they quit. So it's very hard to start in the media industry and be a person of color or even be a woman starting off, because the industry is dominated by unionized and nothing against unions at all. But when you're in production, you normally have to hire out the union. So those guys are middle age white guys, and they make it very uncomfortable. So what makes our program unique is we make sure we give the work experience to our alumni through outlets that we have.

[01:43:30.310] - Speaker 6

That's what Hip Hop TV, Green Eye Media Commerce Archives, or outlets of employment for our young people that graduate from the program so they don't have to deal with what many have to deal with. We did a panel discussion for the Oakland National Film Festival, and Raphael, the director of the program, gave his example when he had to go get coffee. And he was hired to telemundo because he could speak Spanish, but he was running to go get coffee and stuff. So his experience is why he created the Hindgym program, is that you got to have an outlet of employment. So practical work experience for these young people so they don't get discouraged to leave the industry because it can be very discouraging. We don't have the opportunity to practice what you've been taught. So when we created the video for Commons Archive, for the truck, the students, every training session, they have to do a project. So this was their project. So they created four common archived videos and Dr. truned, myself, Sue, I'm missing a couple there that were created. So they fully produced the videos. They came out designed to shoot, edited the shoot, ran the cameras, set the lighting and sound.

[01:44:56.080] - Speaker 6

So from A to Z, they produced the productions, and then they turned those in for their final projects. And Raphael gave them feedback on the creation of it. Sue gave feedback on the creation of it and insight. And I gave some feedback, too. So that's a part of the process. So every lesson they create projects that they turn in for their final project. So in this case, it was the Commons Archive. They like it. They like it. So many of them attended the first event, the launch event at the library, and they really like it. They really like it. I'm working with a couple of them now, some editing projects for Hip hop TV. And we just talked about it, how they enjoyed creating those and the interesting. And they really loved it. They came out so nice. So they really liked the way they came out, and it was great experience. Now they're doing other projects. I just had a couple work on Hyrule Day, the big music festival here in Oakland. Two weeks ago. I have another one editing our new show right now and a couple of other shows that we're producing.

[01:46:04.430] - Speaker 6

So they're excited and really looking forward to participating. And our goal is to figure out how to continue so commons, archive and here here project well into the future and how our young people continue to produce content, great content of the storytelling of this incredible city.